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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [UK](#)
SUBJECT: HMG REQUESTS FORMAL CONSULTATIONS REGARDING
WIDEAWAKE AIRFIELD ON ASCENSION ISLAND

REF: TREMONT-FREDERICK EMAIL 1/24/08

¶1. (SBU) Summary and Action Request. Following up on ref a request for informal consultations, PolMiloff received a letter and non-paper April 22 from HMG requesting formal consultations on renewing the 2003 HMG-USG Agreement concerning the use of Wideawake Airfield on Ascension Island. Embassy London notes that according to the 2003 agreement, we are obligated to begin consultations within 60 days of this formal request. Embassy requests guidance.

¶2. (SBU) Begin Text of Letter:

22 April 2008

Pamela M Tremont
First Secretary (Political)
Embassy of the United States of America
24 Grosvenor Square
London W1A 1AE

Dear Pam

2003 AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UK AND USA CONCERNING THE USE OF WIDEAWAKE AIRFIELD ON ASCENSION ISLAND

As we have discussed, the 2003 Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the United States of America concerning the use of Wideawake Airfield on Ascension Island by Civil Aircraft not engaged in Scheduled International Air Services (hereafter "the Agreement") expires on 30 September 2008. This letter acts as a formal request for consultations under Article VIII (Consultation) of the Agreement with a view to extending the Agreement as envisaged under Article X (Entry into Force and Duration).

The British Government would also like to take this opportunity to update the Agreement to take account of issues linked to the Saint Helena air access project that the British Government's Department for International Development (DFID) is funding, and to discuss longer term interests. The British Government has six objectives for the future use of Wideawake Airfield by civil aircraft, which it would like to discuss with the US Government with a view to including them in future Wideawake agreements.

These objectives are a mixture of short-term and medium-term. The first two of these objectives would require negotiation and agreement before 1 October 2008 as part of the negotiations on the extension of the current Agreement. The remaining four are medium-term and we would not envisage being ready for negotiations on these for another 18 months by when the future prospects of the proposed Saint Helena airfield and potential commercial air services using it will be clearer. We appreciate these objectives have more

implications. Details of these six objectives are contained in the attached non-paper that we discussed on 24 January 2008.

The FCO's Overseas Territories Directorate (OTD) would lead the UK team in negotiations on the Agreement, with participation from the Ministry of Defence, DFID, Department for Transport and the Ascension Island Government. We would be happy to conduct the initial discussions by video teleconference if that can be arranged.

I should be grateful if you could relay this request to your authorities, with a view to agreeing mutual acceptable dates for a consultation on the amendment and extension of the Agreement as soon as possible or, if that is not possible, within the timeframe envisaged under Article VIII of the Agreement i.e. within 60 days of receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Allen
Acting Director
Overseas Territories Directorate

cc: Robin Twyman, OTD, FCO
Catherine Duncan and Jessica Pogson, FCO Legal Advisers
Nishi Dholakia, British Embassy, Washington DC

End Text of Letter

13. (SBU) Begin Text of Non-Paper:

NON-PAPER ON THE 2003 AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UK AND THE USA

CONCERNING THE USE OF WIDEAWAKE AIRFIELD ON ASCENSION ISLAND
BY CIVIL AIRCRAFT NOT ENGAGED IN SCHEDULED INTERNATIONAL
SERVICES

The 2003 agreement expires on 30 September 2008.

The British Government would like to renew the agreement, but take the opportunity to update it to take account of issues linked to the St Helena air access project that the UK's Department for International Development is funding, and to discuss longer term interests.

The British Government has 6 objectives for the future use of Wideawake Airfield by civil aircraft, which it would like to discuss with the US Government with a view to including them in future Wideawake agreements. The objectives are as follows:

Short-term (for negotiation before October 2008)

11. To rollover the current allowance for "four civil aircraft movements (take off or landing) at Wideawake Airfield each week" (see Wideawake Agreement Article III(1))

12. To allow Wideawake Airfield to be designated as a diversion ("alternative landing") for a St Helena/Africa chartered service (for contractor workers on the St Helena airport project). This would be included within the weekly movement limit, but actual use is likely to be low. This would be required from end-2008.

Medium-term (from 2011/2012, for discussions starting in around 18 months)

13. To use Wideawake Airfield for a weekly scheduled or chartered domestic service between St Helena and Ascension Island. We envisage that this would be required from 2011/2012, when the St Helena airport is due to be complete, but is subject to tender and commercial operators providing the air service. The market would be tourists, and St Helena workers on Ascension and the Falkland Islands.

14. To allow international flights to St. Helena (either one of scheduled or charter) from the UK/EU to use Wideawake

Airfield as a staging point. This has the potential to be a requirement from 2011/12, and would be subject to completion of the St. Helena airport and willingness of commercial operators to provide the air service.

¶5. To allow Wideawake Airfield to be designated as an alternative landing for St Helena/South Africa scheduled service from 2011/2012. Actual use is likely to be low. It would be subject to completion of the St Helena airport and willingness of commercial operators to provide the air service.

¶6. To allow Widewake Airfield to be designated as an alternative landing for other flights into St Helena from 2011/2012 e.g., a regular charter from UK via various destinations. Actual use is likely to be low. It would be subject to completion of the St Helena airport and willingness of commercial operators to provide the air service.

These objectives are a mixture of short-term and medium-term. We would hope that objectives 1 and 2 would be addressed in the discussions about an extension or rollover of the current Wideawake Agreement. These discussions would need to be completed before the current Agreement expires in September ¶2008. We would like to discuss objectives 3-6 with the US Government, which we appreciate have more implications, in about 18 months' time by when the future prospects of the proposed St Helena airfield and potential commercial air services using it will be clearer.

The FCO's Overseas Territories Directorate (OTD) would lead the UK team in discussions on the Wideawake Agreement, with participation from the Ministry of Defence, Department for International Development, Department for Transport and the Ascension Island Government.

This Non-paper does not represent a formal request for consultations within the meaning of Article VIII (Consultation) of the Wideawake Agreement. The British Government plans to formally request consultations after the initial informal bilateral discussions.

Overseas Territories Directorate
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London
24 January 2008

End Text of Non-Paper.

¶4. (U) Action Request. Embassy requests guidance.

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http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Unit_ed_Kingdom
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